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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/715,299	11/17/2003	John W. Steedly	GC-529	5225

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EXAMINER

HANSEN, JAMES ORVILLE

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

3637

DATE MAILED: 04/15/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/715,299

Applicant(s)

STEEDLY, JOHN W.

Examiner

James O. Hansen

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 28 January 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 and 6-20 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 and 6-20 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 28 January 2005 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 1-2 & 6-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Grogan [U.S. Patent No. 6,325,281] in view of Gutsch [U.S. Patent No. 1,870,005]. Grogan (figures 1-4) teaches of a plurality of display cases (30, 40 for example), wherein the display cases are of increasing size (30 bigger than 40), and wherein the smaller sized display case is of a dimension such that that it is capable of being stored inside the larger sized display case, and wherein the display cases are capable of being attached to each other (such as in a nested arrangement) to form a single display unit, wherein each display case is comprised of upper, lower, front, rear and side elements (all disclosed in the specification), wherein the lower, front, rear and side elements of the display case are composed of polystyrene foam [expanded & open-cell polystyrene], wherein the lower element of at least the small case connects to the front, rear and side elements along the bottom edge of the front, rear and side elements, wherein the front, rear and side elements connect to one another along the vertical edges of the front, rear and side elements, wherein the lower, front, rear and side elements form a container capable of storing items for display, wherein the upper element (62, 63) forms a removable lid that fits within the front, rear and side elements, and wherein the lid for the larger container contains a top surface (61) capable of holding displayed items.

Grogan teaches applicants inventive claimed structure as disclosed above, but does not 1) specifically state a method of storing, transporting and [now positively claiming this aspect] displaying an object, or 2) show the vertical elements of the larger case as being connected to the lower element along an edge [appears that the vertical and lower elements are integrally formed]. Gutsch (figures 1-5) is cited as an evidence reference to show that it was known in the art to provide a structure for storing, transporting and displaying an art object as presently claimed by applicant. Accordingly, the position is taken that it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to a) provide a display case and b) store, transport and display an object as prescribed by applicants method because 1) the normal use of Grogan's structure would inherently accommodate such steps as set forth since Grogan teaches of a structurally similar device and the device is used to transport items while having the ability [level upper surface -fig. 1] to place one of the items on the case either before or after shipping, and 2) to provide for an object to be displayed as taught by Gutsch because the arrangement of displaying the object on the structure allows the object to be at a suitable vertical height for use or visual inspection by a user. As to the construction of the display cases, it is viewed that forming the case as an integral member or forming the case from a plurality of elements does not distinguish the invention from the prior art in terms of patentability since the construction of the case lacks a new or unobvious functional relationship to the case itself. As to claim 6, the nested cases (fig. 4) may be separated (fig. 3) and the cases placed adjacent to each other or stacked [flaps folded over] as dictated by the user's needs or situation. As to the inclusion of more display cases within the system, it is viewed that the addition of another smaller case may be implemented depending

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upon the needs of the user, since such duplication of the parts i.e., an additional case, involves only routine skill in the art.

3. Claims 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Grogan and Gutsch and further in view of Sabol Jr., [U.S. Patent No. 6,264,527]. The prior art teaches applicants inventive claimed structure as disclosed above, but does not show the elements of the case being connected via rabbetted joints with the aid of an adhesive. Sabol (figures 1-14) is cited as an evidence reference to show that it was known in the art to join elements of a case together with the use of rabbetted joints and an adhesive. Sabol shows a case formed by elements having rabbet joints (fig. 3 for example) and adhesive [glue]. It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the element joining means of Grogan by utilizing the rabbetted joints and adhesive as taught by Sabol because this arrangement would provide Grogan with a more stable and semi-permanently erected case that is constructed without the aid of tools and mechanical fasteners yet is more structurally sound due to the interconnection of the jointed elements [as opposed to joining elements along a single flat surface].

4. Claim 4 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Grogan and Gutsch and further in view of Thor [U.S. Patent No. 4,194,657]. The prior art teaches applicant's inventive claimed structure as disclosed above, but does not show a side element containing a hook and loop connector to allow for multiple cases to be attached. Thor (figures 1-5) is cited as an evidence reference to show that it was known in the art to utilize a hook and loop connector (49) on a side element of a case for the purpose of attaching the case to another object with a mating hook and loop connector. Accordingly, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the

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art at the time the invention was made to modify the case of the Grogan so as to incorporate a hook and loop connector (Velcro) onto a side element of Grogan's case as taught by Thor because this arrangement would allow the case of Grogan to be fastened to an adjacent structure employing a mating strip of a Velcro thereby removably attaching both structures to each other.

5. Claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Grogan. Grogan teaches applicant's inventive claimed structure as disclosed above [note the rejection to claims 1-2 & 6-8], but does not specifically state the construction of the cases. As to the construction of the cases, it is viewed that forming the case as an integral member or forming the case from a plurality of elements does not distinguish the invention from the prior art in terms of patentability since the construction of the case lacks a new or unobvious functional relationship to the case itself. The concept of constructing a formally integral structure into a structure made up of various elements [same structure] involves only routine skill in the art.

6. Claims 10, 12-13 & 16-20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Grogan in view of Morrison [U.S. Patent No. 4,325,597]. The examiner has taken the position that only the largest case [or exterior case when cases are nested] utilizes the covering. Grogan teaches applicant's inventive claimed structure as disclosed above, but does not show a carpet or fabric covering some of the elements. Morrison (figures 1-49) is cited as an evidence reference to show that it was known in the art to utilize a fabric or carpet to cover elements of a structure. Accordingly, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the case of the Grogan so as to incorporate a fabric or carpet layer on the case's elements as taught by Morrison because this

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arrangement would provide the case of the prior art with a more esthetically pleasing appearance. It is noted that fire retardant is commonly utilized within fabrics and carpets. The vertical elements of the cases being substantially rectangular, while the upper and lower elements are substantially square (note the figs.).

As to the type of material utilized, it would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to vary the type of material used to construct the case, since it has been held to be within the general skill of a worker in the art to select a known material on the basis of its suitability for the intended use as an obvious matter of personal preference. Accordingly, where the material is not functionally related in a new or unobvious way to the device upon which it is assembled, the material will not distinguish the invention from the prior art in terms of patentability.

As to the bonding of the elements via an adhesive, the examiner takes the position that one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made would deem the incorporation of an applied adhesive to adjacently positioned elements for the purposes of securely attaching the elements in a prescribed configuration as an obvious adaptation not rising to the level of novelty for patentability purposes.

7. Claims 11 & 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Grogan and Morrison and further in view of Thor. The prior art teaches applicant's inventive claimed structure as disclosed above, but does not show a side element containing a hook and loop connector to allow for multiple cases to be attached. Thor (figures 1-5) is cited as an evidence reference to show that it was known in the art to utilize a hook and loop connector (49) on a side element of a case for the purpose of attaching the case to another object with a mating hook and loop connector.

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Accordingly, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the case of the prior art so as to incorporate a hook and loop connector (Velcro) onto a side element of the prior art's case as taught by Thor because this arrangement would allow the case of the prior art to be fastened to an adjacent structure employing a mating strip of a Velcro thereby removably attaching both structures to each other.

8. Claim 15 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Grogan and Morrison and further in view of Sabol Jr. The prior art teaches applicants inventive claimed structure as disclosed above, but does not show the elements of the case being connected via rabbetted joints. Sabol (figures 1-14) is cited as an evidence reference to show that it was known in the art to join elements of a case together with the use of rabbetted joints. Sabol shows a case formed by elements having rabbet joints (fig. 3 for example). It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to modify the element joining means of the prior art by utilizing the rabbetted joints as taught by Sabol because this arrangement would provide the prior art with a more stable and semi-permanently erected case that is constructed without the aid of tools and mechanical fasteners yet is more structurally sound due to the interconnection of the jointed elements [as opposed to joining elements along a single flat surface].

Response to Arguments

9. Applicant's arguments filed January 28, 2005 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. It is viewed that applicant's remarks are adequately addressed in the rejections.

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10. Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-2 & 6-8 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

11. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

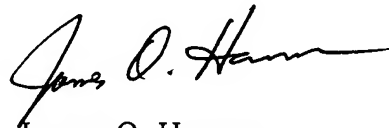
A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to James O. Hansen whose telephone number is 571-272-6866. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday between 8-4:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lanna Mai can be reached on 571-272-6867. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



James O. Hansen
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3637

JOH
April 12, 2005